

Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Meeting Notes for June 17, 2003

Agenda Items

- Pine Street Vent Shaft 60% Design
- Beacon Hill Station 90% Design
- Downtown Surface Improvements

Commissioners Present

- Don Royse
- Jack Mackie
- Mimi Sheridan
- Matthew Kitchen
- Jay Lazerwitz
- Tom Bykonen
- Carolyn Law

Staff Present

- Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
- John Walser, Sound Transit
- Carol Valenta, Sound Transit (STart)
- Kathy Dockins, CityDesign
- Lisa Rutzick, CityDesign
- John Rahaim, Design Commission
- Norie Sato, STart
- Dan Corson, STart

LRRP Business

Lisa updated the Panel on the following items:

- The budget for the Fifth Supplement will remain essentially the same. Staff is also working on a budget associated with the Construction Services Agreement (CSA) which will allow for the on-going monitoring of the panel recommendations as construction activities begin.
- Staff is working with DoIT staff to get the website updated and Panel members are encouraged to navigate the site and pass along any comments to staff.
- The minutes from the last meeting (April 1) will be approved at the next meeting (not yet scheduled).
- Staff will have a better sense of the North Link review schedule after the SEIS is done (anticipated at the end of 8/03).
- Panelists should let Lisa know whether or not they are interested in remaining on the Panel for the next phase of North Link review.
- Future meeting locations will be determined by assessing where most presenters are coming from and getting the closest space (Key Tower, City Hall, Union Station, or the Opus Room).
- A thank-you card for Cheryl was circulated for Panelists to sign.

Jack notes that two items on the agenda will require action: Beacon Hill 90% Design and the Pine Street vent shaft. The Beacon Hill action is assigned to Jack and the vent shaft action is assigned to Don. The agenda will be modified slightly today, with Downtown Surface Improvements and Beacon Hill 90% Design exchanging places.

Jack also notes that he took a "field trip" to Sounder on Saturday and recommends that all other Panelists do so as well.

The meeting began with introductions all around. In addition to Panelists, staff, and presenters, attendees included: Youn Lee and Daniel Kohn, Streeter Architects; Andy Moniz, Moniz Associates Architects; Lisa Downey, Bruce Kinnan, Doug Powell, and David Clinkston, OTAK; Dean Gregory and Colette Middleton, Murase Associates; and Carl Smool, Beacon Hill Plaza artist.

Pine Street Vent Shaft – 60% (First LRRP Review)

John Taylor, Puget Sound Transit Consultants

Gregory Hill, Streeter Architects

Background and Proposal:

John acknowledged that the Panel is seeing the vent shaft later than they would have liked (this is the first time). It has been moved from its original site on Terry Avenue to the Sound Transit-owned parcel directly east of The Paramount Theater, across the street from Convention Place Station. The new site is currently a surface parking lot. The plan is that the proposed structure will be temporary, and that future development on the site would incorporate the shaft in its design. The site may revert to parking afterward, until North Link construction has begun. Sound Transit has been asked to locate the top of the structure at least eight feet above street level in order to restrict unauthorized access. Mechanical engineers are in the process of sizing the venting portion in order to reduce odor and noise. The vent shaft includes both the shaft as well as a maintenance stairwell.

Discussion:

- Is Terry Avenue vacated? *No. There are sanitary/sewer and water lines underneath it. There are no current plans to vacate Terry unless WSDoT develops it later and combines it with other WSDoT parcels.*
- Doesn't the tunnel meet the venting requirements for this site? *No. Is this the same type of structure discussed for the Montlake shaft? It will depend on the preferred alignment (for North Link).*
- Is this vent shaft used for intake or exhaust? *Both. We're trying to supply cooling air for the electrical substation to control its temperature.*
- Why can't you have the shaft travel horizontally and vent at Convention Place Station? *King County-Metro has further development plans, which include lidding over the CPS and constructing residential & office space above the lid. They will continue to need the space to run buses until North Link has been completed through to Northgate.*

Vent Shaft Design:

Greg Hill presented the design aspects of the shaft. Because of the varied architectural styles and building uses in the immediate area of the site, the following questions were considered in the design development: Should they build the shaft structure and emergency stair on a pedestrian scale? Should the design acknowledge the historical buildings like Pande Cameron, The Paramount, and The Camlin? Or perhaps the design should incorporate more flamboyant architecture? It appears that there is also modern development in the area as well so the vent shaft could relate to either architectural character. Consequently, three design options for the shaft were developed: a box/barrel vault, a cylinder, and a fairly literal "Y vent" shape. The more specific urban design considerations include referencing the lower cornice line of the Paramount defining the edge of the sidewalk, which is now open to the surface parking lot and defined by parked cars. Given that this site is the first site one encounters heading westbound on Pine Street, defining the edge of the right-of-way with landscaping, columns, and/or banners were considered and presented to the Panel.

Debora Ashland also pointed out that this is the stub tunnel (where the trains turn around) between the Downtown Station Transit Tunnel to the Pine Vent Shaft. Design began in April 2003 and reached at 60% level within a month, so although this is the first time the Panel is seeing the design, ST has not been working on this project for very long.

Discussion:

- Do all three design concepts (a barrel vault, a vent, and a cylinder) take up the same amount of space? *From the grade down, yes. They're slightly different from grade up. What's the anticipated time frame? When does "temporary" become "permanent?" Although it's temporary, it may be around for ten years. The site would not be available for development until North Link is built. The expectation is that North Link will happen, and then that parcel will be absorbed as the rail is extended. Regardless of the alignment, the stub tunnel is necessary for the trains to turn around.*
- Is this proposed location for the vent shaft fixed? Can it be moved north, south, east, or west? *There are additional ramifications if it's moved, which is why this location was chosen. The tunnel will be to the east. If the shaft is shifted further to the west that might pose some difficulties for the fans. If it is shifted further to the south additional tunneling would be necessary. With this location, there are still options for potential corner development, parking stalls, and the garage layout.*
- Will the vent shaft eventually be dismantled? *After North Link has begun and transit-oriented development has occurred on the site, it is expected that the shaft would be incorporated into that development.*
- What materials are being considered? *Possibly terra cotta or granite which offers a high durability. Since the site is unsupervised, concern about graffiti is driving the material selection. The use of brick or painted concrete is less desirable as they are not as easy to clean.*
- Is the vent shaft for emergency only or will it be running consistently? *Venting would occur only in an emergency only, similar to The Bon Marche's vent. The egress stairs are to be used only in emergency and for maintenance purposes.*
- Have you considered using metal? *We've thought about it, but we were concerned about durability.*

Deliberation:

- I'm not in love with the straightforward "Y" concept depiction. It may be around for only ten years, but something "quieter" might be more appropriate. I prefer the barrel vault concept with the rectangular building for the escape stair. *It's important to decide on the design. The surface can be determined later, but it's important to have something visually interesting. STart will work with Streeter to decide on the cladding.*
- I don't like the "Y" vent either, but I like the other two alternatives. Either will definitely need to include art & detailing.
- I agree. I think the "Y" is too showy. The round shape calls attention to circulation, and the barrel shape references The Paramount, both of which are preferred.
- I think it would be okay to have something a little flamboyant there, but I also like the circular shape. The rectangle is too similar to a sub-station. Surface character and alignment are needed.
- It would be helpful for the Panelists to weigh in on the edge treatment ideas, since that will be the first thing people encounter heading towards downtown.
- The architecture needs to go one way or the other - either make the design nondescript or make the design "way out there."
- Perhaps both approaches could work. There's a part of the Portland system where two buildings (shaft & stairway) occupy the same space and play off of each other. For the edge treatment, the north side of EMP provides a good example. Regarding the cladding, neither the terra cotta nor brick are desirable.
- I like the attempt to make two forms respond to each other. With the edge, the structure will march along the façade. If there's art on the vent, it should be recognizable (not hidden by the edge treatment). I'm afraid landscaping (as an edge treatment) would not survive and that perhaps the building should bump into the sidewalk. *We can have STart work on the*

edge. We originally thought of a low hedge, but the reason we wanted greenery in the first place is because the area is dominated by a lot of shades of grey.

- I'm also concerned that the green would not survive and surveillance of the site is important so if landscaping is proposed, it should take into account preservation of the sight lines.
- My least favorite option for cladding would be painted concrete, but if that is unavoidable please select colors other than those of Sound Transit!

Action:

The Panel thanks Sound Transit and Streeter Architects for the presentation and agrees that the overall placement of the vent shaft makes sense. For the expression of the facility itself, there is little support for the "Y vent" and much more support for the two other designs, especially if they can be separate and play off of each other. The Panel recommends that art be incorporated into the edge treatment, using the character found at the EMP example for inspiration. The Panel also encourages the design team to work with the STart team on incorporating art into the vent structure as well as the emergency stair. The Panel would not be supportive of landscaping unless it is done in a way that fosters longevity. The Panel recognizes the lack of visual surveillance and the desire to use landscaping, but encourages Streeter to consider other alternatives. The Panel requests that concrete be used only if painted a lively, interesting color, and suggests that other materials be considered altogether. Lastly, the Panel encourages the design team to highlight the two different elements of the structure and respond to both parts.

Downtown Surface Improvements

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit

Background and Proposal:

Before the tunnel is closed for work in 2005 or 2007, surface improvements will be made along several downtown streets to keep street traffic running smoothly during the tunnel's closure. Some roads will be closed while operating signals are improved.

Although Sound Transit is doing the work, Metro is providing the funding. In addition to the improvements of signals, some security cameras will be installed. The streets affected include: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenues; Olive Way; and Prefontaine Place South. All work will be completed prior to the tunnel closure.

Discussion:

- Is this different from the shelter design reviewed approximately two years ago by the Design Commission? *A prototype bus shelter is being developed. The current design has not yet been approved and adopted by King County/Metro and ST.*
- Are you looking for a permanent decision? *We won't continue to act on this. Metro's shelters are being installed, but they are continually being refined.*
- The King County Arts Commission art program is also working on the design of these shelters.
- The Design Commission will also be reviewing the final design. If they do come back it may be to the Design Commission, not LRRP.
- Is this a complete re-do of the previously reviewed plan? *No, only the shelters.*

Beacon Hill 90% Design

John Walser, Sound Transit

Dean Gregory, Murase Associates

Carl Smool, BH Plaza Artist

Dan Corson, BH Tunnel Artist

Background and Proposal:

John presented an overview of the underground Beacon Hill station, with which most Panelists are already familiar. The tunnel is approximately 166' deep and runs under the commercial core of Beacon Hill. The station site is near the intersection of Beacon Avenue South and South Lander Street and in close proximity to El Centro de la Raza, the BH Library, and the Red Apple grocery. The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial with a pedestrian overlay. The same zoning designation continues along Beacon Avenue to the north and south. To the east of the site, the zoning changes to Single-family residential.

The entire block will be used for staging during construction, and a 16' noise wall barrier will be erected for the duration of the construction. Once the station construction is completed, the property will be bladed and hydro-seeded and will become available for re-development. Mixed use development on this block is both anticipated and encouraged.

Two elevator shafts are proposed for this station using high-speed elevators to transport people from the street to the station below grade. The main headhouse/shaft is 47 feet in diameter and will include four elevators, exit stairs and an air ventilation system. The smaller east headhouse/shaft is closer to Lander Street and includes a maintenance elevator. There will be no interior public space in the headhouse itself; the elevators are the entrances and will bring users to the public space in the tunnel.

Station Design:

The development of the landscape plan for this site identified the two headhouses as two distinct segments responding to the neighborhood context and station function.

There was a lot of detail on the building itself (in previous iterations and the internal design team thought it might be too busy and were concerned about potential conflict with Carl's artwork installations. Consequently, the brick detail on the main headhouse was removed.

There is a vast difference between the way the building is experienced from the inside versus the outside. The design team started out by looking for ways to connect the two visions. The use of stainless steel in the tunnel, elevators and on the exterior trellis will help integrate these elements together. The louver behind the art will be a dark color accentuating the glass canopy over the bike area. The curvature of the elevator reflects the actual curvature of the tunnel.

The deep, dark blue on the tunnel walls represents the concept of the infinite in order to counter the "straw tube" feeling of the 100' long tunnel. The ambient red light atop the elevators will be seen from outside and change from red to violet to blue as the elevator ascends and descends.

The concept for the landscape design is based on the surrounding community, which has historically and presently been a crossroads of diversity. Such diversity is represented by criss-cross patterns and diagonals in the station plaza and the landscaping.

The use of wedge-shaped planting beds and angles helps to define the desired circulation pathways for pedestrians. It also reconciles the complex geometry of the intersection of Beacon Avenue, South Lander, and the headhouses. The plants include timber bamboo (which will grow

35' to 40' in height) and horse-tail (which will maintain a 2' profile and is not the leafy version with which many are familiar). There will also be granite blocks for seating areas.

The proposed hardscape materials include the naturally-colored standard City of Seattle concrete, with darker grey concrete pavers. The concrete pathways to the elevator will be the same color but corrugated as a tactile warning. Stainless steel strips will alternate with the concrete and granite strips to highlight the criss-cross effect.

Art Design:

The artwork in the plaza and at the station was designed by Carl Smool and reflects Common Threads, Community Patterns, with the design inspired by textile patterns from around the world.

Four large banner pieces posted are proposed to be located within the planting beds, at heights ranging from 26' to 35'. The banner pieces will be on stainless steel poles with a bearing system allowing movement with the wind. The poles are to be laser-cut steel with a powder-coat finish in natural, vibrant colors (e.g. reds & complementary colors).

There will also be illuminated sculptures based on lantern forms, nestled in the bamboo planting beds. These designs were inspired by cylindrical baskets. They proposed sculptures are laser-cut steel and are lined with a metal mesh to prevent objects from getting stuck inside. They lanterns features include uplighting and constitute a shorter member of the "family of forms" and will be a night feature for the station, as the banners won't be as visible in the evening.

The paving strips will have a sandblasted pattern like carpeting. The color of the granite will shift at the sandblasted part. Because the sight impaired braid is also sandblasted, the design team is considering alternative sandblasted patterns which will not conflict with the standard braid design. They may reduce the depth or put colored infill in the granite. The theme of his artwork is a "sampler of world patterns" – an important way to express the neighborhood's cultural diversity. Carl feels strongly that the community understand this intent and he is thinking of producing a booklet for the public meeting in July.

The artwork for the tunnel and below grade station area was designed by Dan Corson. Dimensional cast-glass hemispheres are planned for the wall behind the elevator shaft. The larger hemispheres will function as magnifying glass and have video screens behind them playing images of inner space, outer space, and the microscopic. LED lights will be behind the small hemispheres.

Abstract representations of diatoms and nudibrachs will be suspended from the ceilings and walls, spreading out toward the "infinite." Their patterning will react with the color of the walls. The figures are thermo-formed from Lexan, and will be generally grouped near the portal, drawing riders along the platform. Sizes range from 4' x 8' to 4' x 11'.

Discussion:

- Is Murase providing landscaping at the vent? *Yes. Sound Transit has established a 20' landscape buffer around the property and may remove landscaping if developers are willing to incorporate the vent shaft into future development. However, Sound Transit is willing to maintain the landscaping indefinitely.*
- Will there be landscaping on the trellis? *Yes, akebia vines will be planted at the base of the trellis, but the trellis itself is intended to provide visual interest where the vine doesn't grow. It is comprised of woven wire and stainless steel mesh in 2' x 2' panels attached with blades into the brick. The design allows for individual panels to be replaced if damaged.*
- The plan shows trees at the Beacon/Lander intersection, but not in the rendering. Which depiction is accurate? *The plan is the newest iteration; we added the trees. General*

agreement among panel members that those two trees are superfluous and interfere with the rest of the design.

- What is the growth representation of the akebia in the rendering? *Approximately five to seven years to reach the desired height.*
- I'm pleased with the north elevation scheme. Could there be one to three fabric pieces interspersed with the mesh panels? I'd prefer to let the trellis recede a bit (similar to the Tacoma Sounder station).
- I haven't seen the Tacoma station, but I think that would make the scheme appear too busy.
- I need some clarification on the banners. Will they look like the model? *The color scheme will be similar to that shown in the model. Each banner will be in three pieces.*
- Describe the plaza lights. *The lights are planned on 16 foot high poles which are screened by vegetation.*
- What about the bus shelters at the station? They will probably come before the Design Commission, not the Panel. *As long as Metro is willing to maintain them, they will determine the appearance.*
- Are the canopy columns steel? It's an implied lobby, so will the canopy actually cover waiting pedestrians? *The elevator canopy extends horizontally to the canopy near the bike area, and depth-wise to 17.5', so people will be well covered. The four high-speed elevators take 20 seconds, so the longest wait anyone should have after pressing the button would be 20 seconds.*
- I like the textile-based pattern on the banner. I think the artwork will be a significant contribution to the experience of the station and tunnel.
- If Carl does compile a booklet of his inspirations behind his artwork, I would be interested in having the Panel review this document.
- For the "blue room" (tunnel) I think the acoustical tile should be as smooth as possible. A steel rib cage and smooth wall would be better. *The proposed surface is a sprayed-on cementitious material approximately 1.5" thick which has an acoustic quality.*
- I'd encourage the finest texture possible with no direct lighting on the blue.
- I'm actually intrigued by the texture.
- Yes, but if the pattern is distinct, it will compromise the feeling of "infinity". The goal is for the appearance of infinite space.
- There will also be a 20-second wait for people going back up. To what extent does the artwork encourage re-visitation? *We're taking huge creative license with this aspect, and figuring out how to relate the changing video images to the forms on the wall. We'll have animated LED and neon inside the forms. We fully expect people to revisit the artwork.*
- I'd like to compliment you on the nature of the architecture; a lobby is exactly how this should feel. I encourage you to continue to look to the transition (in the tunnel), with blue turning to black as one moves deeper through the tunnel. *They are considering the use of a pyrock material for the 100 foot transition from station into the tunnel. They are also considering the use of light to activate this transition area.*
- I think this is a fabulous station and I really appreciate the landscaping. I think the neighborhood will be very happy.

Action:

The Panel thanks Sound Transit, the designers, and the artists. This is a very well-designed station that will fit well into the neighborhood. The proportions of the site plan work well and complements the arch of the platform and experience of descending into the building. We especially appreciate the care given to the platform area. Even to those passing through this station, it will offer a memorable experience.

We encourage you to further develop the tunnel space transition. We also encourage a finer and more uniform texture for the platform/tunnel walls. The Panel would like to review these test panels showing the texture of the deep blue color.

We recommend removal of the street trees shown at the intersection of Beacon Avenue and South Lander, allowing the other landscaping to define the station.

We appreciate and compliment the textile-based artwork and would like to see a printed version of the art schemes. We appreciate your concern about the textile theme interfering with the braid but do not expect that it will pose a problem.

The north elevation has been smartly resolved.

Conclusion

Carol Valenta expressed a desire to bring back all of the art details for one final presentation to the Panel; Lisa Rutzick will schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm after a viewing of the Sound Transit promotional video.